

Air Strikes are the Main Way of Killing

Scope of the Report: Documenting the Syrian governmental forces shelling on Ad-Dmeer city in Damascus countryside

Introduction and Methodology:

The methodology of the report is based on the investigations conducted by [SNHR](#) team with activists and eyewitnesses from Damascus countryside. It includes two eyewitnesses' accounts in addition to the verified pictures and video footages sent by cooperating activists from inside the city given that no one of our team was able to reach the targeted area. Four video footages were verified. Also, the names of the eyewitnesses were modified upon their request.

[For more information about the network's methodology in documenting victims, please visit the following URL](#)

Details:

Ad-Dmeer city is 45 Km to the northeast of Damascus. [The following URL shows the city location.](#)

On Sunday, 15 December, 2013 the warplanes of the Syrian government have targeted the Southern neighborhood of Ad-Dmeer city with several rockets without any prior warning or reasonable cause. This attack caused a huge destruction in the residential buildings and killed 26 people including 10 children and three women in addition to no less than 250 injuries.

[SNHR](#) has contacted the Human Rights activist Abu Azzam in Ad-Dmeer city, and he gave the network his testimony:

At about 10 am we've watched about 15 air strikes targeting the Southern neighborhood of the city which caused the destruction of more than 30 houses; half of which were totally destroyed. I was one of the team members who were working on covering the incidents and pictures of the targeted areas and medical points. I've counted more than 25 people who were killed including women and children and many injuries, more than 200. We were significantly short on medics and equipment as the field-hospitals inside the city don't have all the necessary equipment."

To contact the eyewitness on Skype by voice: sasoke11122

[SNHR](#) has talked with Mr. Marwan Al-Qadi from Ad-Dmeer city:

"After the FSA have announced the start of the rocket gas stores liberating battle, the regime pushed on the rebels by shelling the civilians as a punishing respond to them. On 15 December, MiG 29 and Sukhoi warplanes carried out more than 17 airstrike in less than an hour. Entire neighborhoods were demolished in the Southern areas, about 25 houses were destroyed, and more than 26 people were killed in addition to 200 injured at least."

[Mr. Marwan's Facebook profile](#)

Appendixes and attachments:

1st: victims' names:

[SNHR](#) documenting team documented the killing of 26 people including 10 children and three women

2nd: photos and attachments:

[A video footage documents the shelled place and shows smokes rising in the area](#)

[A video footage documents an injured being treated after the shelling on Ad-Dmeer city](#)

[A video footage shows a number of the victims killed by the shelling: Link 1, Link 2](#)

Conclusions:

1-SNHR affirms that the shelling against Ad-Dmier city is an act of indiscriminate shelling that targeted armless civilians, thus the government forces and its militias have violated the articles of the international law for human rights which guarantee the right to live. Furthermore these violation were perpetrated during a non-international armed conflict which can be classified openly as war crimes.

2- SNHR believes that this indiscriminate shelling that killed people in Ad-Dmier city is a crime against humanity as this is not the first time that an attack of this kind has been carried out. This has become almost a daily experience in Syria which indicates the systematic and widespread manner of these attacks.

3- The random attacks committed by the government forces are considered violations of the customary international law considering the fact that government forces have attacked residential areas rather than a specific military target.

4- These attacks, especially aerial shelling, have caused casual humanitarian and material losses. There are strong indicators that prove that the damage was deeply severe compared to the expected military advantage.

5- The magnitude of this wide systematic frequent shelling, the level of its excessive strength, its military nature, and the coordinated approach of these attacks must be based on high orders, and a state policy.

Reccomendations

The Security Council and the United Nations

1. Transferring the Syrian case to the International Criminal Court and stopping the disrupting of the decisions that must be adopted by the Security Council against the Syrian government. This disruption is a wrong message to all the dictatorships around the world and an enhancement to the culture of crime.

2. Posing urgent punishment on those who are involved in the violations of human rights.

3. Obliging the Syrian government to allow all relief and human rights organizations to enter Syria, in addition to the International Investigation Committee and allowing them to work freely.

4. Insuring the ceasing of importing all sorts of weapons to Syrian government because it is using in comprehensive attacks against civilians.

5. Security Council must shoulder responsibility in preserving security and civil peace in Syria because the violations of the Syrian government are considered gross threat to international peace and security.

6. Listing the militias that are fighting with the Syrian government which committed massacres, like Hezbollah and the other Shiite brigades, National defense Army and Shabiha militia on the international list of terrorist organizations. Among these militias is the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria which committed lots of crimes in the areas that are not controlled by the Syrian government.

7. Applying the principle of “protecting civilians” that was adopted by the General Assembly in Syria now, as the situation there is direly requiring such a principle now.

8. Considering the crimes against humanity committed by the Syrian government, this government can't be dealt with as an “official side”. Furthermore, stopping supplying the Syrian government with the greatest amounts of financial and humanitarian aid as it don't reach those who need them in most cases but go instead to the supporters of the Syrian government.

Human Rights Council

1. Demanding the Security Council and the involved international institutions to shoulder responsibility concerning the sufferings of the Syrian people which include killing, arrest, rape and displacement.
2. Applying pressure on the Syrian government in order to stop the acts of killing and torture.
3. Holding the allies and supporters of the Syrian government - Russia, Iran and China –as materially and morally responsible for the killing that is happening in Syria.
4. Human Rights Council must pay more attention and consideration to the catastrophic situation of the children, families and relatives of the victims in Syria.

The Arab League

1. Punishing all those who are involved in committing crimes in Syria and urging all the countries of the world to do the same thing.
2. Increasing humanitarian aid, especially on the levels of education and health care and taking care of the Syrian refugees in the Arab countries.
3. Requesting the Security Council to execute the above recommendations.
4. Asking the Human Rights Council and the United Nations to pay more interest to the case of daily killing in Syria.
5. Taking the Syrian issue very seriously and considering it as a priority, and trying to take care of the families of the victims psychologically, materially and educationally.
6. Applying political and diplomatic pressure on the main allies of the Syrian government; Russia, Iran and China in order to prevent them from continuing to provide international and political backing and protection for the crimes committed against the Syrian people, and holding them materially and morally responsible for all the violations of the Syrian government.

The Syrian Government

1. Instantly stopping all kinds of human rights violations.
2. Respecting its international commitment to protect civilians in the time of war and respecting the articles of the International Human Law as it is one of the sides that endorsed Rome Convention, in addition to respecting the International Law for Human Rights.
3. Allowing instant access to the International Investigation Committee and facilitating its work and co-operating with the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights and national human rights organizations.

The International Investigation Committee

The International Investigation Committee must stop depicting the struggle in Syria as a struggle between two sides equal in crimes, power and the centralization of decisions. It must describe the crimes the same way they happen without belittling their extent for political reasons. The committee must also increase the number of its staff who work on the Syrian issue due to the amount of the crimes committed daily in Syria so that it conduct a more comprehensive documentation.